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February 2, 2016

House Committee on Transportation
And Infrastructure

Dear Committee Members,

Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance opposes House Bill 4423 with regard to allowing a "general gravel road speed limit." Allowing a general speed limit of 55 miles per hour makes biking or walking along these roads a perilous journey.

Michigan is #1 in the country for the number of multi-use trails. We are now in the enviable position of linking many of these trails together. Two of these efforts are the Iron Belle Trail from Belle Isle to Ironwood and the Great Lake to Lake Trail from South Haven to Port Huron. The trail routes pass through many rural areas; indeed that is part of the beauty of the route. Quite a few of the gaps in these trails, however are in these rural areas where there are gravel roads lined with agricultural fields and other privately owned large tracts of land. The only alternative is to share the back country roads where there is less traffic. This is also where people who live along these roads walk for their fitness and recreation.

In many spots, the roads are hilly and curvy with a poor line of sight for motorists to see bicyclists or pedestrians. Setting a general allowable speed of 55 miles per hour would endanger not only the residents that live along these roads but anyone who is traveling by foot or by bike. Speed kills.

The Project for Public Spaces, a nationally renowned organization that helps communities revitalize in order to boost their economy and sense of place conducted a survey across the country asking people what ingredients make for a successful place. Having places to walk was cited as one of the most critical ingredients.

By allowing a set standard for speed limits, without allowing for the context of its use or the needs of the people who live along it, vital avenues for nonmotorized transportation disappear.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Krupiarz".

Nancy Krupiarz
Executive Director